

# Hugh S. Gibson Dies at Geneva; Veteran Diplomat, Relief Aide

Foreign Service Officer 30 Years, 71, Led Committee on European Migration

By The Associated Press.

GENEVA, Switzerland, Dec. 12 —Hugh S. Gibson, retired United States diplomat and director of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, died this morning at the age of 71.

The veteran diplomat, who had served the United States at many posts throughout the world and had represented his country at dozens of international conferences, succumbed to a heart attack at about 9 o'clock at his home outside Geneva.

Mr. Gibson's son, Michael, who was on a visit to Paris, returned to Geneva.

Although suffering from a broken bone in his foot and able to move about only in a wheelchair, Mr. Gibson had presided at the principal sessions of his committee's semi-annual meeting ten days ago. He told the opening session of the twenty-four-nation group that European political and economic stability for the next ten years could be assured only through the emigration of 5,000,000 Europeans.

During forty-six years in international affairs, Mr. Gibson represented the United States on many important and dramatic occasions.

His name first became known when, as legation secretary in Brussels, Belgium, he took part with Brand Whitlock, United States Minister, and others in efforts to save the life of Miss Edith Cavell, a 50-year-old British nurse who had been shot by the Germans for acts inimical to their invading army early in World War I.

On the night of Oct. 12, 1915, during Miss Cavell's last hours, Mr. Gibson and the Spanish Minister, the Marquis de Villalobar, sought in vain to convince Baron von der Lancken, the German political officer in Belgium, that the shooting of Miss Cavell would give the British a mighty propaganda lever. It was a warning that proved well-founded.

From this time until his death, Mr. Gibson held many and varied posts in the United States diplomatic service and with organizations having a semi-official governmental standing. In World War I and after, he collaborated with Herbert Hoover in international relief work, and many of



The New York Times, 1952  
Hugh S. Gibson

his State Department assignments were made to areas in which this training could be useful.

Hugh Simons Gibson was born in Los Angeles on Aug. 16, 1883. He was a son of Frank Gibson and Mary Simons Gibson. His father was a Scottish-born bank cashier.

Mr. Gibson received his preliminary education from private tutors and completed courses in the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris in 1907. His first post in the Foreign Service was that of secretary at the legation in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in 1908.

From 1911 to 1913, he was secretary at the legation in Havana and, while acting as chargé d'affaires there, was the center of an international incident. Mr. Gibson had been called upon to adjudicate a commercial matter between Cuban and American interests. Enrique Maza, a Cuban newspaper reporter, said that he believed Mr. Gibson's decision in this matter had been an insult to Cuba and sought out Mr. Gibson and struck him in the face.

The Cuban Government tried to avoid action in the matter, but the United States insisted upon the punishment of Maza, who served twenty months in prison.

After service in Belgium and at other posts, during World War I, Mr. Gibson became first secretary to the United States Embassy in Paris toward the close of the war. He left this post in 1918 when Congress appropriated \$100,000,000 to establish the American Relief Administration. He served as director general of this organization, of which Mr. Hoover

was chairman. In the eight months between the end of the fighting and the signing of the final treaty of peace, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Hoover had distributed nearly 5,000,000 tons of food-stuffs.

In addition to his duties with Mr. Hoover, Mr. Gibson served on an inter-Allied commission that made the first post-World War I report on the condition of the war-ravaged Balkans.

In 1919 Mr. Gibson was appointed Minister to Poland, a post that called for more relief administration work than diplomacy during the formative years of the new republic.

From 1924 to 1927 Mr. Gibson was Minister to Switzerland, then a key post because of the presence in Geneva of the headquarters of the League of Nations. In this capacity Mr. Gibson served with several delegations studying international disarmament. He was chairman of the American delegation to the meeting of the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament at Geneva in 1927.

In this and other similar duties Mr. Gibson took a lead in movements to reduce armaments, but these efforts for the most part were not entirely successful. In that same year he was chairman of the United States delegation to the Conference for Limitation of Naval Rearmament, which had wider, if more controversial, results.

He returned to Belgium as Ambassador in 1927. He held this position until 1933 and was returned to it by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1937. He retired from the post the next year.

Early in his tenure as Ambassador to Belgium, he was a delegate to the London Naval Conference in 1930 and returned to Geneva two years later as acting chairman of the Disarmament Conference.

In the period between his two terms as envoy to Belgium, Mr. Gibson was Ambassador to Brazil. While in this post, he served as the United States representative on a mediation group that ended the seven-year-old Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay.

Mr. Gibson retired from the Foreign Service in 1938. His long experience in relief work later resulted in his appointment to the Migration committee. Until his death, he directed the work of the semi-official organization, which seeks to develop opportunities for immigrants from Europe to go to places where they can make solid contributions to modern life.

Mr. Gibson was the author of a number of books on international affairs. On several occasions he collaborated with Mr. Hoover in serialized magazine articles, which later appeared in book form.

In 1922, Mr. Gibson married Mlle. Ynés Reyntiens, a daughter of Maj. Nicholas Reyntiens of the Belgian army. She was the only daughter of the seventh Earl of Abingdon of England. Mrs. Gibson died on March 19, 1950.

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